

County Council Report from Peter Bellfield

I am very sorry that I am unable to be with you tonight. Four Parish Councils have their meetings this evening and I have another appointment, which I must attend. Please telephone me should there be any matters with which I can help.

Various matters continue to exercise the County Council at the present time.

Schools reorganisation where consultation with parents, governors and staff is continuing in the first two areas to change to the two-tier system.

Waste incineration, where we will shortly be told which were the sites considered for the plant, which one has been selected, and why.

The Budget where we were pleasantly surprised by the Central Government grant for the coming year. The Council received £155m, which is £10m (7.3%) more than last year compared with our expectations of less than £4m. This will help us to reduce the adverse effect of some of the £16m of savings, which we were having to make. I do not yet know where the relief will be directed.

The U turn on the Ipswich Unitary Bid, and it was a U turn because at 10.00 am on the morning of the announcement both Ipswich B.C. and Suffolk C.C. received the final draft of the conformation to be announced in the afternoon, at 10.05 am they both had an e-mail saying that the bid was not going ahead. What the future for local government in Suffolk is now we do not know. While the three tier system (i.e. County, District and Parish) is not dead, it does appear that some form of Unitary is much more likely. Until we see the terms of reference to the Boundary Committee it is not possible for us to judge the Government's thinking. We believe that we should see these in the early spring.

Those of you who are interested in the planning application on Debach airfield the District Council Development Control Sub-Committee hearing will be in Woodbridge Community Centre at 9.00am on 28th January. I will be speaking against the application because of the HGV traffic generation.

A happy and healthy new year. Peter.